3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

463

A list of craftsmen and their trade vide page 105. A few words may be added here on some particular crafts. They have skilful blacksmiths; these make spears, BLACKSMITHS 326
hoes, axes, harpoons, picks, arm-rings of brass and of iron, bells, chains. Their handicraft, which is carried on chiefly during the dry season, is a travelling one; they take their tools and go about from one place to another. While among the Dinkas the blacksmiths are considered a low, despised class of people, who live separate from the villages in the bush, with the Shilluks they are respected persons, and accordingly their pay is good. The employer has to support the blacksmith working for him, and pays him a sheep beside. Iron is not found in the Shilluk country. Previous to the opening up of the country to the traders the iron secured by the Shilluks came from the Dinkas and Nuers, who seemed to buy it from the natives of the Upper Nile regions (Jurs, Bongos), where iron is smelted; some may also have come from Darfur through Kordofan. In recent years, however, nearly all of it is procured from the north, and is of European origin. A remarkable proof of the growing willingness on the side of the natives to work for wages is the fact that during the last two years the American missionaries have introduced and sold to the natives some thirteen tons of raw iron, together with a great number of good iron tools, as axes, etc. Not only the raw material, but even the finished articles of native manufacture are gradually being replaced by European imports. Their good spears are still made by their own blacksmiths, but many cheap spears are bought from the traders; so are their crude axes, mattocks and hoes. Iron bracelets and other ornaments are made by their blacksmiths from iron rods. If the rod is too large, it is heated and beaten out. Whatever the Shilluk blacksmith makes, is superior to the imported article that he gets from the Arab or Greek trader. It may be mentioned that the word *bigg*, which means originally and properly "blacksmith", has also the wider sense of "craftsman", and has become a designation for all other crafts they practise.

[171 565]

439

[461] 177

326

An important craft is that of the thatch-maker. The roofs of the Shilluk OTHER CRAFTS 331
houses are of a peculiarly neat description. While the Dinkas generally leave the roof with the appearance of being unfinished, the grass not being smoothed down and cut at the ends, the Shilluk thatcher makes his thatch with a neatness which really excites admiration. The framework of the roof is always made on the ground and placed on the circular wall like a great conical cap.

Plaiting is practised by both sexes. Men make the large, coarse mats for enclosing yards, and also the large grain baskets. Women plait small fancy mats for covering food, and also very nice small coloured baskets, sieves, etc.

285 462

Most of the men make their own ostrich shell girdles. The shells are first broken into irregular pieces, which are pierced in the center with an awl-

321

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

535 643 778 of *reth* Fafiti's houses, searching for him in the way the dancers had done at the funeral dance. They stopped before each house while the dancers danced up to them. They spent rather longer in front of the tomb of Fafiti, and then suddenly moved off on their way with all their following.

643 778 [533] [535] They passed the village of the new *reth*, paying no attention to it, and went direct to the village of the chief of Golbainy (and all Gol Dhiang). Some 150 yards north of the village the images stopped, and the company prayed to them and sang. They approached the village from the side away from the road, but, instead of dancing straight in, they stopped on the threshold, and the people of the village, led by the chief, danced up to them as if to ward them off, and then quickly retired. The chief was called up, and then went off to his house. He brought a small grass mat (one foot square used for covering pots as a protection from flies), a small piece of rope,[14] and put them on the ground. Dak and Nyikang stepped over the mat and rope and entered the village. A short dance round the village followed of the usual pattern, with Nyikang and Dak taking part. After a little Nyikang and Dak took up a position before the house which had been prepared for them in case they should wish to spend the night. The congregation sat down before them and sang songs. The women sat with heads averted from Nyikang. The refrain of the most popular song was :—

[415] 285

[533] 539

"Let the Dervish wreak his will,

Nyikang's land will prosper still."

643 [755] The chief was called once more and had a secret talk with Dak. It is the tradition that Nyikang presents the chief of Golbainy on every installation with a spear, because originally Nyikang invested his forebear with a spear of office. The alleged original spear is still used to cure disease. A piece of goat's ear is cut off with the spear and tied on the patient's ankle. The chief first provided a cattle

14. This may have been a pledge for the gift of sheep or a bull, or instead of a sheep for Nyikang to step over on entering the village.